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SUBJECT: LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM UNDERWAY TO PROVIDE
ACCURATE DATA AND IMPROVE HEALTH STANDARDS

Refs: A) Amman 51
B) 07 Amman 4622
C) 07 Amman 3584
D) 07 Amman 1762
E) 06 Amman 1513

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¶1. (SBU) The Government of Jordan (GoJ) has completed part one of a three-stage process to register and tag all ruminant animals, including sheep, goats, camels, and cattle. One goal of the project, which began mid-February and is scheduled to be completed by April 2008, is to create an animal traceability system so that authorities can pinpoint the source of any disease outbreak or epidemic. Amjad Dawish, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Project Director, informed Post's FAS office that the project would enable GoJ authorities to trace every animal to its herd, flock, or backyard farm, which in turn empowers the veterinary service to better maintain animal health.

¶2. (U) The project's second goal is to provide a credible, statistical database of livestock counts for use by policy-makers. Previous efforts to determine the number of ruminants, such as an August 2007 census, failed or were criticized as inaccurate (Ref C). Precise information is needed as Jordan reevaluates its feed subsidy program. Jordan imports most of its annual consumption of 730,000 metric tons (MT) of barley from abroad; only 35,000 MT is produced locally. The cost of the GoJ's direct barley subsidy increased from \$40 million in 2002 to about \$160 million in 2007, triggering concerns about the effect of the subsidy policy on the already overburdened budget (Ref B). The GoJ needs reliable data to manage the remaining subsidy program and its phase-out, as well as its successor which will provide scaled, cash payments to owners of small livestock herds.

¶3. (SBU) Implementation of a national identification program is long overdue. To promote the U.S.-Jordan FTA, a Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) team visited in February 2005 to assess Jordan's animal health status and eligibility to export meat and meat products to the U.S. (Ref A). The final report highlighted, among other deficiencies, the need for an animal traceability program. The EU shares U.S. concerns, and through a twinning arrangement under a broader capacity-building program, funded part of the

current identification program with a \$765,000 grant for plastic numbered tags, electronic tags, and computer equipment. The GoJ has contributed \$705,000 and will allocate an additional \$1.05 million in 2008.

¶5. (U) Two types of plastic tags will be used in the identification program - one for all ruminants and an extra machine readable tag for cattle. A tag for camels will be introduced later. All tags record Jordan as the country of origin, the governorate or sub-governorate, animal type, gender, year of tagging, and a six-digit serial number. Information from the machine-readable tags can be downloaded to a central database accessible by MoA and other government officials.

¶4. (U) In implementing the tagging project, the country has been divided into three zones: north, south, and central Jordan. The GoJ anticipates that 95 percent of ruminant animals will be accounted for in this initial survey. By the end of the program, no animal without a tag will be slaughtered. Regulations allow authorities to fine a farmer \$100-500 and impose a jail sentence upon non-compliance.

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